

University of Montana ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Mike Mansfield Speeches

Mike Mansfield Papers

2-24-1961

Congressional Record S. 2498 - Montana Railroad Mergers and Service Curtailment

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches

Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Congressional Record S. 2498 - Montana Railroad Mergers and Service Curtailment" (1961). *Mike Mansfield Speeches*. 511.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/511

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

were unattainable except through hard work. Hard work did not deter these people, for in America, as nowhere else in the world, a man was truly free. The people worked and suffered but never yielded. Great cities sprang from the earth, until in some places there were forests of buildings instead of forests of towering trees. Industries grew, agriculture flourished, and our country became what it is today—prosperous and still growing.

Hard work and creative thinking built our country, but our country was born and preserved in blood. Americans fought to gain their independence. They fought against common foes. They even fought brother against brother. Yet in the end the United States of America remained united. Such is the history of our Nation, built by the sweat, blood, and ingenuity of countless individuals.

This is our heritage. I, as an American, proud of my heritage, will defend it. Where else can there be so much prosperity and abundance? Where else will you find a Catholic and a Protestant running for the Nation's highest office and have each man considered for his abilities and not for his religion? Where else will you find territories so eager to become a part of the nation? Where else will you find the Government so close to and so representative of the people?

My answer is: Nowhere else but in my homeland—America. To some people America may be the farms and fertile valleys. To others bustling cities, filled with humanity, may spell America. A Negro mother may hear America in the voice of a Marian Anderson. A Jewish citizen may look with pride upon the life story of Albert Einstein. An Italian citizen may add his lusty voice to thousands of other voices cheering a Rocky Colavito.

America is a combination of all these things. America represents something intangible, yet something we live by, day in and day out. It represents something people have given and will give their lives for. It represents something people take for granted at times. It represents democracy. Democracy, our daily way of life, can survive only if all of us are determined to keep it alive.

Therefore, I vow to defend my country, not with arms and fists, for I am quite helpless with these; not with angry words, for they are of no avail; but in every way I can—through my actions and with my heart. Every time I am given an opportunity to voice my disagreement, I will try to remember that I, too, must give others an equal opportunity to voice their opinions. Every time I communicate with God in my own way, I must remember to put in a few words of thankfulness. Every time I am given a chance to make my own decision, I must weigh the facts carefully, for with my privileges come certain responsibilities. I will defend democracy, for democracy lives through you and through me.

MONTANA RAILROAD MERGERS AND SERVICE CURTAILMENT

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, today an examiner for the Interstate Commerce Commission is conducting a public hearing in Miles City, Mont., the second of two hearings in my State, concerning the application filed by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Co. to discontinue passenger train service between Minneapolis, Minn. and Seattle-Tacoma, Wash.

Also on February 17 the Northern Pacific, Great Northern, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad Cos. filed an application with the Interstate Com-

merce Commission requesting approval of the proposed merger of these four railroads.

Montana is served by three transcontinental railroads, the Milwaukee Road, the Northern Pacific, and the Great Northern. These railroads play a very important part in the economy of the Treasure State, and they have provided the major source of freight and public transportation. Montana has also been good to these railroad companies.

Now in two separate actions these roads want to curtail, abandon, and consolidate railway service in Montana. If the abandonment and the consolidation are approved, it will mean unemployment in a State which is already confronted with serious depressed economic conditions, and it will take away service from an area which is still fighting to get an orderly public transportation pattern to serve its public. These are very serious matters, and I wish to address myself to these problems for a few minutes today.

The field hearings which are now being conducted by the ICC examiner in Montana concern the Milwaukee Road's announced intention to discontinue the operation of the Olympian Hiawatha passenger train between Minneapolis, Minn., and Seattle-Tacoma, Wash. At the present time the Milwaukee serves 10 Montana communities. If these passenger trains are taken out of service, four of these cities will have no passenger train service, and it is a considerable distance to any other line. The proposed discontinuance will also affect other branch line service now operated in the State by the Milwaukee Road. In most of these communities the Milwaukee Road is a very large influence on the local economy. In fact, at least two of these cities are major points on the Milwaukee Road. If these trains are taken off, it will mean unemployment, disruption of service, and economic distress.

The merger of the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads in Montana will have repercussions which are difficult to predict at this time. Will the passenger train service be reduced to one major line instead of two? What will happen to the rail centers such as Laurel, Livingston, and Havre which serve these lines? Another matter that concerns me greatly is, What will we have if the ICC approves these applications? We will have a monopoly over all passenger train service between Minneapolis and Seattle-Tacoma. This is difficult to justify, in my estimation.

My colleague, the able junior Senator from Montana [Mr. METCALF], shares my concern over these developments in the railroad industry.

The railroads of this country have had some tough sledding on occasion, but in recent years sincere attempts have been made to assist them in putting their operations back on a sound business basis. However, I do not think there was ever any intention to let the railroads escape their responsibilities to the consumer and the traveling public. In the instance of the railroads operating in Montana, I have not noticed that any of them were

on the verge of bankruptcy. The railroads should quit playing one side against the other; they should face up to their problems. Train discontinuances have become a serious matter in the delivery of mails in some areas of the country.

I know I speak for LEE METCALF as well as myself when I say that because of its growth Montana and the Northwest need the services of competitive transcontinental railroads. We suggest that the Milwaukee Road, the Great Northern, and the Northern Pacific fight to maintain their competitive position in the transportation field with new imaginative policies instead of withdrawing to an easier road to financial prosperity. A brochure circulated by the Milwaukee Road suggests that the approval of its request to discontinue passenger train service from Minneapolis to the west coast will permit them to eliminate a losing operation and enable them to better serve its patrons and the general economy. What about their patrons in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho, and Washington?

I have ridden the passenger trains on each of these transcontinental railroads, in fact many times. Admittedly, they are not always filled to capacity, but it seems that something could be done to overcome this situation by revising the present rate structures and improving service. Certainly no one would say that passenger trains have become passé. I, myself, like to ride on trains; they offer many conveniences and services that cannot be obtained on any other means of public transportation. Why not offer cheaper train fares to operate the passenger trains at near 100 percent of capacity rather than the present usual 20 to 25 percent? The trains run. Fill them up.

The Interstate Commerce Commission is the authority in these matters, and I do not intend to exercise any undue influence upon them. However, I suggest that the examiners and the Commissioners of the ICC not only listen to the hard, cold facts of a financier's reports and the smooth arguments of legal counsels, but that they also give serious consideration to the man on the street, the inarticulate small businessman, or the small chamber of commerce who can not afford legal representation, the people who will be hurt by curtailment, abandonment, and consolidation of railroad service.

The Northwest is growing. We have an abundance of resources. The railroads can be a part of the future, but not if they retreat. The elimination of Milwaukee passenger trains and the consolidation of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, C.B. & Q., and S.P. & S. will only add to Montana's distress—a distress figure which now stands at 14.6 percent of our work force unemployed, second only to Alaska with a figure of 18.3 percent. We are not proud of that percentage, and we do not want to see it worsen, but that is what will happen if the railroads have their way.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed at this point in the

RECORD newspaper articles, editorials, and communications relating to this subject.

There being no objection, the articles, editorials, and communications were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION,
Washington, D.C., December 19, 1960.

HON. MIKE MANSFIELD,
U.S. Senate.

HON. LEE METCALF,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

GENTLEMEN: I have your telegram of December 12, 1960, expressing your views in opposition to the proposal of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Co. to discontinue effective January 8, 1961, trains Nos. 15 and 16 operating between Minneapolis, Minn., and Tacoma, Wash., Finance Doc. No. 21391. I also have Senator MANSFIELD's letter of December 8, 1960, enclosing a copy of a telegram from Mr. W. R. Lintz, of Deer Lodge, Mont., who also expresses his views in opposition to the proposed discontinuance.

Numerous protests to the proposal of the railroad have been received and consideration is now being given by the Commission as to whether it should institute an investigation of the proposed discontinuance. In the event the Commission decides to institute an investigation of the proposal of the railroad, an order to that effect will be issued on or about December 28, 1960.

Your request that the Commission issue an order instituting an investigation of the proposal of the railroad is noted, and you may be assured that careful consideration will be given thereto, as well as to the contentions of all parties before a decision in the matter is reached.

I have arranged for you and your correspondent to receive copies of all notices, reports, and orders that may be issued in the proceeding.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN H. WINCHELL,
Chairman.

DECEMBER 12, 1960.

JOHN H. WINCHELL,
Chairman, Interstate Commerce Commission,
Washington, D.C.:

On December 6, 1960, the Milwaukee road filed a statement with the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Commission giving notice of its intention to discontinue transcontinental passenger-train service between Minneapolis, Minn., and Seattle-Tacoma, Wash. This action will terminate the operation of the Olympian Hiawatha trains 15 and 16 in the State of Montana.

The Milwaukee road has a long career in Montana and it continues to bear an important economic influence on a number of communities in the State. The discontinuance of this passenger-train service will have a very serious affect on service and employment in 10 Montana cities. While the Milwaukee road may have compelling reasons for taking this action the welfare of many of our constituents will be adversely affected.

We, therefore, request that the Interstate Commerce Commission issue an order of investigation in this case, under existing authority, requiring that service on this portion of the Milwaukee road be continued for an additional 4 months so that this matter can be thoroughly studied. We are deeply interested in this matter and under separate cover we are sending you a sampling of constituent views.

Regards.

MIKE MANSFIELD,
U.S. Senator.
LEE METCALF,
Member of Congress.

FEBRUARY 17, 1961.

EVERETT HUTCHINSON,
Chairman, Interstate Commerce Commission,
Washington, D.C.:

The application filed for approval of the merger of the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad Cos. is potentially one of the most far-reaching proposals to affect the State of Montana and the Northwest in many years.

The Northern Pacific and the Great Northern have long competitive histories in the development and service to the Nation's fourth largest State. The approval of this consolidation would place rail transportation in the hands of a virtual monopoly in view of the Milwaukee road's announced intention to curtail and discontinue service between Minneapolis, Minn., and Seattle-Tacoma, Wash.

This merger raises many serious questions which must be answered to the satisfaction of the people of Montana. What changes in employment and service will there be in our State? How many railroad employees will be displaced? What Montana communities will lose passenger and freight service? What improvements may be anticipated?

While the officials of the railroad companies involved may have compelling financial reasons for seeking the approval of this merger we are opposed to any plan which will bring about a major displacement of railroad personnel, curtailment of passenger and freight service, and resulting effects on local economies in a State already hard hit by chronic depressed conditions. Please keep us advised of all developments in this matter. Regards.

MIKE MANSFIELD,
LEE METCALF.

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 21, 1961.

C. F. REARDON,
Great Falls, Mont.:

We have requested Interstate Commerce Commission, examiner for Interstate Commerce Commission, to permit you to represent us at public hearing, Elk's Building at Miles City, Friday, February 24, 9:30 a.m. Please read the following statement: "Because of prior commitments and congressional business of importance to the State of Montana and the Nation, it is impossible for us to come to Miles City to appear at this important public hearing. We do, however, wish to make it known and reiterate our statement presented to the Butte hearing that because of potentially serious economic repercussions, increased unemployment and loss of passenger train service to certain areas of Montana, we must express our opposition to the proposed discontinuance by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Co. of passenger trains Nos. 15 and 16 operating between Minneapolis, Minn., and Tacoma, Wash. The Milwaukee Road has a long history in the State of Montana. It has provided transcontinental train service, employment for hundreds of people and in certain areas it is a major contributing factor to the economic stability of cities and towns. In some areas of central Montana it is the only means of public transportation. Major areas of the State of Montana are now plagued with depressed economic conditions and the approval of this plan to discontinue Milwaukee Road passenger train service in our State would only increase and extend these conditions. We ask that very serious consideration be given to all the testimony received in Miles City today." We also extend our greetings to our many friends in eastern Montana and please assure them of our deep interest and concern in this matter.

Regards.

MIKE MANSFIELD,
LEE METCALF.